

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 IO-13 ADP-00 SCA-01 VO-03 PPT-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 M-03 A-01 OC-06

RSR-01 /148 W

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R 101316Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0286

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CPAS, LY

SUBJECT: PASSPORTS: COLLAPSE OF RUBBER STAMP COMPROMISE

1. BRITISH EMBASSY INFORMED JULY 9 BY MFA THAT RUBBER STAMP NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY OFFICIAL SEAL OF PASSPORT-ISSUING GOVERNMENT. MFA TOLD BRITISH COUNSELOR THAT CIRCULAR NOTE WOULD SOON BE DELIVERED TO ALL MISSIONS IN TRIPOLI CODIFYING THIS POSITION. WE, IN FACT, RECEIVED NOTE MORNING JULY 10, DATED JULY 9. NOTE STATES THAT THE MINISTRY "TRUSTS THAT THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN LIBYA WILL NOTIFY THEIR GOVTS TO PLACE THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE GOVT BELOW THE RUBBER SEAL."

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2. BRITISH/MFA MEETING ON PASSPORTS WAS RESULT VISA PROBLEMS FOR BRITISH NATIONALS IN MALTA. OFFICER OF BRITISH EMBASSY TRIPOLI TRAVELLED TO MALTA FOR WEEK JULY 2-9, CARRYING WITH HIM ARABIC INSERT STAMP FOR BRITISH PASSPORTS. BRITISH EMBASSY MALTA PROVIDED STAMPS TO BRITISH SUBJECTS, WHO THEN APPLIED FOR VISAS AT LIBYAN EMBASSY MALTA. LIBYAN EMBASSY REFUSED VISAS WITHOUT OFFICIAL STAMP. WHEN SITUATION REPORTED TO TRIPOLI, BRITISH COUNSELOR SECURED APPOINTMENT WITH MFA CHIEF OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS IN ATTEMPT "CORRECT" LIBYAN EMBASSY MALTA MISAPPLICATION OF RULES AS UNDERSTOOD BY BRITISH. CONSULAR CHIEF TOLD BRITISH THAT LIBYAN EMBASSY MALTA WAS CORRECT AND THAT IT WAS OTHER LAR MISSIONS WHICH WERE IN ERROR IN ISSUING VISAS FOR PERSONS WHOSE PASSPORTS CONTAINED ONLY UNAUTHENTICATED RUBBER STAMP. MFA OFFICER TOLD BRITISH COUNSELOR "YOU KNOW SIMPLE STAMP IS NOT WHAT WE WANT; ANYONE COULD PUT STAMP IN PASSPORT." IN REPLY TO BRITISH COUNSELOR'S OBSERVATION THAT LIBYA'S POSITION WOULD "PLACE IN JEOPARDY THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LIBYAN AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS", CONSULAR AFFAIRS OFFICER SIMPLY INVITED BRITISH TO DRAW THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS.

3. COMMENT: WE COULD SAY "I TOLD YOU SO" TO OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES WHOSE COUNTRIES HAD "SOLVED" PASSPORT ISSUE BY FOLLOWING OUTLINE OF FRENCH COMPROMISE. THIS, HOWEVER, IS VERY FLEETING SATISFACTION. BELIEVE WE ALL MUST EXPECT NEW ROUND OF LIBYAN PRESSURE ON THE FOREIGN COMMUNITIES. AT SAME TIME WE CONTINUE CONVINCED THAT ANY COMPROMISE WITH LIBYANS ON THIS ISSUE WILL ONLY TEMPORARILY HALT THEIR SLICING OPERATION. PROBLEM WILL NOT GO AWAY UNTIL THE LIBYANS EITHER HAVE ARABIC PRINTED IN OTHERS' PASSPORTS OR ARE FACED WITH SUFFICIENT OPPOSITION TO CONVINCE THEM THIS GOAL UN-ATTAINABLE.
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